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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

WOOD CARVING.

WOOD carving ranks next to sculpture in the fine arts, its effects lying in form and the play of light and shade. Few tools are required. The best productions of Grinling Gibbons, the great master of the art, are in soft, pliable lime tree wood, but this presents special difficulties in giving light and bold effects. For delicate designs, hard and close grained woods are preferable.

In giving an even depth to the parts not in relief the raised objects are outlined. Leaves are best treated by giving them an undulatory surface. A reposeful and graceful effect is imparted by drooping points. Scroll work combines admirably with stems, leaves, fruit and berries, the latter partly in alto relievo and partly in the round, owing to its solid characteristics. Similarly, ribbons intertwined with bouquets, festoons or foliage and flower work in a mirror frame, impart in flowing graceful lines, easily traced, and therefore contrasting with the intermixed objects, a more compact appearance. The carved work when finished is smoothed with glass paper, and may be polished with linseed oil and then varnished.

Now that refined taste has asserted its ascendancy, that cumbrous overloading is in no danger of being revived, this beautiful art, capable of giving such fine effects, whether on walls, ceilings, furniture and objects of pure ornament, as in pendants, finials, frames, drops, festoons, in figures in the round gracefully reclining under entablatures, in caryatides supporting friezes, and in flowers, birds, fruit, etc., on caskets, bookcases, brackets, should more than ever find patronage and engage the attention of amateurs in art who have leisure and skill in design. The artist should not only copy but be inventive. This was the case with the producers of the olden works, marked by beauty, finish and spirit. The skillful management of light and shade, allied to otherwise good composition, is the triumph of the carver. Carving should invariably accord with the general form of a constructive object to which it is applied, for it loses attractiveness in the degree to which it appears to encumber or distort the general form. The carving should above all things give expression to the form. This canon of art applies to all raised work. In a vase, for instance, the points which seemingly require to be strengthened thus allow of the heaviest massing of ornament. In carving the impression of its ornamental purpose should predominate.

Carving must be in character with the object ornamented. Attention must be given to the point of sight from which a composition is to be viewed; otherwise a design, admirable in itself, may present a confused mass, seeming to want general relief. Many carvings are marred by inequalities of execution, one part entirely destroying the effect of the other, as where figures are mixed with conventional ornament. There is a naturalistic school which has gone too far in substituting carved decoration for the thing itself, and this in an imitative style; failing of harmony with the objects decorated, the natural objects, without lines and de-

velopment, arranged according to conventional rules, become monotonous and formal.

The realistic representation of natural objects in wood carving is injudicious and out of place in any event, and appropriateness of places for carving is an element to be considered, the want of harmony between the thing represented and the disposition made of it often produces unsatisfactory effects.

IMITATION OF CARVED OAK ON DOOR PANELS.—The panels having been filled with lincrusta, are finished in a dark oak ground, made from white lead, Oxford ochre and a little Vandyke brown or burnt umber. The last coat of ground color is best applied as flatting. For the glazing color Vandyke brown ground finely in oil and thinned out with one third Japan gold and two thirds of turpentine, is to be brushed smartly over the work and stippled before it has time to set. Clean wiping is aided by using a cloth damped with turps.

A POLISH FOR CABINET WOOD CARVINGS.—An excellent polish for standards, pillars, claws, etc., is composed of a pint of spirits dissolved in two ounces of seedlac and an equal quantity of white resin. It is to be applied warm.

WHEN a lamp burns poorly boil the metal burner in soda and water. This will cleanse it of all accumulation from the oil, and the light will be restored to its original brilliancy.



DESIGN FOR PANEL IN CARVED WOOD.